



# GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

MAY 2015 VOLUME 6 ISSUE 5

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# How lucky are we to live among such generous neighbors



by **Susan Beckett**  
Publisher

We in Washtenaw County have abundant access to high-quality – and often free – entertainment and educational programs that feed our communal thirst for knowledge and creativity. They come to us through our universities, faith communities, non-profits, and individuals and groups who just want to create and share. Last month's Fool Moon and FestiFools Parades, and this month's Water Hill Music Festival and Awesome Fest, exemplify this ethos.

This generosity of spirit and deed is displayed in many ways that benefit Groundcover News, too, from the submission of articles to the purchase

of advertising and individual copies of the newspaper. This community has nurtured our inception and growth – including a whopping 38 percent jump in circulation in the last year alone.

Most recently, we saw this generosity materialize at the Get Groovy with Groundcover fundraising event, conceived of and arranged by the performing band, Stevie D and the Wannabes. Quickly jumping on board to make the night even better were the Heidelberg Restaurant, the U-M student Groundcover group and the businesses they solicited for donations – Downtown Home and Garden, Jerusalem Garden, Literati, Miles of Golf and Moosejaw – and our community of supporters. Proceeds and other donations will offset the cost of five vendors and volunteers attending the international street newspaper conference in Seattle this June.

It is no surprise that our community quickly embraced the educational and communal value of convening with representatives from street newspapers from around the world. It is who we are.

That spirit extends to housing county residents. The Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor

Housing Commissions (AAHC) are engaged in a multi-year project to improve the energy-efficiency, livability and availability of their affordable housing units, and the Ann Arbor City Council is considering relaxing zoning laws and adding development requirements that would expand the range of affordable housing choices in the private sector.

As the AAHC completes the remodeling of Miller Manor, veterans and others who have long been homeless are now being set up with places they can afford. This population includes many Groundcover vendors. Once housed, they are in a good position to expand their skills and participation with Groundcover News and the community in general.

How lucky are we, to have found like-minded people with whom we can create a community overflowing with compassion and generosity!

Around Milan, he was known as a pastor at the Vineyard Church of Milan, the loving husband of Amy Loring and the father of two beautiful young children. "Planting churches" was one of his passions – born, as was he, in Houston, Texas, to Rev. Ben and Dr. Ruth Loring.

John Loring passed away at the tender age of 44 from glioblastoma, an inoperable brain tumor, discovered only 11 weeks before his death.

Loving, accepting, generous and supportive, John contributed deeply to everyone he met. He helped create PORT, now part of Community Support and Treatment Services, so help could be brought to the mentally ill and homeless people who needed it. He gently mentored co-workers and colleagues in understanding and caring for those they served.

He talked me through creating policies and procedures for Groundcover News that would support sobriety and always made time to help when I struggled with situations beyond my experience. His was the face I sought out first at any gathering addressing homelessness – not only because of his insights into whatever was my current dilemma, but also because it just felt good to be with him. God's love was always present in him.

The First Congregational Church was packed on Feb. 22 when MISSION sponsored a celebration of life for John and one of their board members, Jimmy Hill, who was also gravely ill. Formal speeches and private conversations abounded with testimonials to the thousands of lives touched by John.

As his colleague Trish Cortes wrote in a note relaying John's passing, "John was an extraordinary human being who demonstrated compassion for others each and every day. Social work was not only a vocation for John but more so an avocation. He was a champion for the most vulnerable citizens in our community."

We are blessed to have had him among us, and now it is up to us to carry his spirit forward.



## Remembering John Loring – always looking forward

On April 8, 2015, our community lost a man who personified the qualities mentioned above. He was known around Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti as the man with the warm smile and flowing brown hair who roamed the streets, parks and bridges to find those people most in need of services. He freely embraced them and gave them money from his own pocket and supplies, and when they were ready, brought them to the Project Outreach Team (PORT) building where they could pick up additional items and connect with shelters and other organizations to help meet their needs.

## Volunteer Meeting – Thursday, May 21 7pm in the Groundcover News office

423 S. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave in the basement of the Bethlehem United Church of Christ. Enter through the parking lot door.

## Help wanted: part-time Sales or Operations Manager for Groundcover News

Call 734-707-9210 for more information on any of the above.

## GROUNDCOVER

### MISSION:

*Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.*

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## Are you able?



by **Rev. Dr. Martha Brunell**  
**Groundcover Contributor**

There is an old traditional Christian hymn from the 1920s called “Are Ye Able,” said the Master.” In this hymn and in other instances when we ask the question, “Are you able,” we could be inquiring about one’s willingness, availability, or capacity. Able is a small, common two-syllable word that reminds us that language is important but not always precise. In this column I am pondering the *capacity* aspect in the word able.

I have watched our cultural awkwardness – on either side of the Americans for Disability Act (ADA), passed in 1990 – with language around the issues this act addresses. Those among us who cannot hear or see, who have significant cognitive loss, mental illness, or mobility struggles have been labelled at different times as the

handicapped, the disabled, or the differently abled. Always in that naming, there is an unexpressed but still-present sigh of relief for the rest of us, who have escaped the contemporary label in use.

Today I was half-listening to a news program on NPR when one line from a report snagged my attention with its truth-telling. A woman being interviewed simply stated: “We are temporarily abled. Stats bear that reality out.”

I knew she was right. No matter how rigorous or slack we are in attending to nutrition, exercise, rest, and other good health habits, it is likely that at some future time, near or far, most of us will find ourselves under the banner of the handicapped, the disabled, or the differently abled. An old athletic injury will flare up. We will receive a diagnosis of Parkinson’s or MS, or ALS. Cancer or a stroke will rob us of a capacity we have simply taken for granted. A broken hip will never fully repair and complications will set in. Dementia will eat away at what we assumed was ours forever. We will find ourselves in partial

recovery from a terrible accident. There are so many possibilities of what could lie ahead. Yes, indeed, “we are temporarily abled. Stats bear that out.”

Into conversation with that simply reality, I offer the wisdom of poet David Wagoner from his poem, “Lost”:

*Wherever you are is called Here,  
And you must treat it as a powerful  
stranger,  
Must ask permission to know it and be  
known.*

We can respond to our “temporarily abled” status with fear, with over-the-top precautions, with an unwillingness to consider or see those already outside the “temporarily abled,” and/or with an openness to the powerful stranger we may become in the future as our ableness shifts.

This statistically shared likelihood for most of us is an invitation to remember the common good now and in the future when we design a building, plan an event, establish a policy, listen to others’ voices, look at a subject from various angles, and widen the sense of

who our community is. I wonder if we are able to treasure the opportunity of the common good as a fundamental focus and understanding in how we live. Will we know and be known within the context of the common good?

There are many aspects of Groundcover News that I value deeply. For me, one of the most important is that it provides me a place to participate in the common good across all sorts of seemingly firm boundaries. Each of us may or may not be financially able, physically able, mentally able, or spiritually able way-out into the distance. From the current security of “temporary abled,” can we broaden our perspective as far as possible? From the current vulnerability of lost abledness, can we muster grace and grit to ask for help and reassure others who shy away from what we already know? We all bear unique versions of abledness to offer the search for the common good in the here and now. Are we able to do that? Are we willing, available, and ready to offer the capacities that are ours?

## Limited perceptions

by **James Hutson**  
**Groundcover Contributor**

Perception, according to the Merriam-Webster website, is “the way that you notice or understand something using one of your senses.” The problem is, we usually use only one of our faculties and it is operating without adequate information – our thoughts.

We think about what we *think* we know... and then lock it in to our expectations. Then we approach those situations where we will encounter those “knowledges” and find ourselves looking like a fish out of the water – flopping around, embarrassed and unsure of our next moves.

After too many “negative” experiences, where our expectations didn’t meet our realizations, we simply retreat into the communities and places “where everyone knows our name.” Be it religious, professional, cultural or ethnic, we stay among ourselves (or those most like us) so our perceptions don’t deceive us. And then we can “belong.”

Does anyone else see the flaw in that logic?

I know two communities that I have either walked in or am walking in now who have negative images of the other. They feel that the “other” does not understand them, hates them, ridicules

them, and would rather they disappear. They are both sides of a social “hot potato” right now. They simply want understanding, respect and acceptance of their norms, ideals and expectations... and are often willing to discuss for the sake of understanding the other... so that perceptions might be changed.

We are the human race, full of individuals (including myself and you) who have an agenda, dreams, hopes and expectations – and until we are willing to meet at the table, piling our agendas in the middle, we will never change our perceptions. If we don’t use our eyes to see individuals, our ears to hear their stories, our hands to help them up or over, and our feet to walk a moment in their shoes, we won’t change anything but our age as we journey along in this world.

If we are willing to lay our agendas down in the middle, willing to risk changing our own perceptions, we can grow as a society and a community of people who impact rather than react, who promote rather than ridicule and love in a world that is harsh enough.

But, to be what we were meant to be, to become fully alive, we have to step outside the conclave of ourselves – of the similar – and reach into the unknown and different, using all of our senses to be involved in the world around us.

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## The United Way of Washtenaw County – the common good

by Alice Newell  
Groundcover Contributor

As a little girl, I recall watching a children's program titled "School House Rock." It came on early Saturday morning on Channel 7 in Detroit. It was a cute cartoon show that taught educational facts set to modern music, and I learned the Preamble of the U.S. Constitution this way. I did not know that this important fact could be taught with a country/folk twist, but I had fun learning it.

One part comes to mind when referring to the continuous striving of a notable non-profit organization that defines the meaning of "promoting the general welfare" – the United Way of Washtenaw County (UWWC). It is dedicated to nurturing all those who are in need by bringing together people, provisions, and other associations to create a thriving network of community support for everyone. The examples of this mission are many.

The United Way supports joint planning and cooperation in concert with currently-funded organizations, the Washtenaw Coordinated Funders, local government, and other community associations in developing solutions to social issues. As members of the Washtenaw Coordinated Funders, who direct funding with the Ann Arbor Area Community and Economic Development to leverage critical local resources, UWWC helps prevent gaps and avoid redundancies in services while streamlining applications and reporting procedures for grantees. This year, it will invest over \$2 million into health and human service programs in five priority areas: early childhood development, school-aged youth intervention, health and nutrition, supportive housing and homelessness assistance, and senior help. To aid the coordination, its volunteer center offers local agencies a "wish-list" where they can generate needed in-kind gifts of toiletries, clothing and other items for its clients.

The UWWC also offers incentives to those who donate. Its Tocqueville Society donors have been recognized in their Annual Report for their yearly gifts of \$10,000. UWWC also recognizes in its Annual Report its Leadership Giving Donors, who contribute between \$1,000 and \$9,999. Both groups receive special invitations to a Leadership Reception that is held in the fall. All costs of the event are covered by its sponsors and the event is free to the donors. Local companies who elect to sponsor the United Way event and its operations are also acknowledged in publications and related material.



The United Way University of Michigan student volunteers showed their support by painting "The Rock" at the corner of Hill and Washtenaw.

Additionally, the UWWC works with many organizations to provide incentives for their employees to donate at the Leadership or Tocqueville levels.

For every action there is a reaction, for every cause there is an effect, and for every concern there is a solution. Beyond assisting in fund allocation, UWWC also assists in creating spaces that those in need can go to. One good example is UWWC's exhaustive mentoring intervention program, exemplified in a local school-age youth program called Ozone House.

This support system aims at helping teens work through hardships. Run-aways and troubled youths can go there for temporary emergency shelter as well as receive help with personal issues. There are two locations, one in Ann Arbor and the other in Ypsilanti. Ozone House provides counseling, job readiness and employment placement plus life skills coaching. It help teens discover their potential by engaging them in activities which then keep them positively motivated and focused. The Drop-In Center also prepares and serves hot meals to its clients, has a pantry for food distribution, has a computer lab for homework help and job searching as well.

This mentorship program is filled with community mountain climbers whose goal is to help give youths and families that fell on hard times a supportive lifting hand of hope. Although the agency is independent, it's exemplary of the magnitude of care that an organization in pursuit of the common good can have for a community.

As wonderful as its resources and services are, UWWC is always seeking future investments to enhance the spread of resources and services available to the community. Recently, it

year to help encourage the students in their endeavors.

The United Way of Washtenaw County plays a significant role in opening doors for others and serves as a liaison to those who want to give back to the community. For more than 40 years, it has effectively and efficiently made a difference in the lives of others by investing in the people of the community. The UWWC stretches itself tirelessly beyond the brink to ensure each contribution is utilized to its maximum capacity in making an impact on the improvement of the lives of others.

Advancing the common good is not just helping one person at a time; rather, it is changing systems to help all. We are all connected and interdependent on each other. When a child succeeds in school, when people are healthy and are financially stable, all these attributes will become the standard by which the promotion of general welfare is established. Investing in people is one of the most meaningful ways to create stability and conquer poverty in a community.

Mahatma Ghandi said, "Happiness is when what you think, what you say and what you do are in harmony."

The United Way of Washtenaw County achieves that trilogy, shining a light of compassion on our community by investing in the treasure of its county, its people.



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## Bethlehem UCC & heavenly music

by Rissa Haynes  
Groundcover Vendor #8

Bethlehem, which means house of God, houses a congregation of true believers who are doing the work of God and not just talking about it. They demonstrate God's love by using their God-given gifts to bless the community. It was the music that drew me in and the people that kept me in.

My first exposure to Ann Arbor's Bethlehem United Church of Christ was on a Christmas Eve Groundcover assignment. I was able to hear the service from my post. This brought back the memories of my home church, St. John's Lutheran.

However, Bethlehem has not only a choir full of angelic voices, but their repertoire of music also includes a heavenly bell choir and an outstanding orchestra. The music literally had an awe-inspiring effect on me. I was moved so much I even stayed for the "candlelight" service. The director of music at that time, Dr. Geoff Stanton, is also a virtuoso organist. When he took a call to a different church, I thought, "Uh-oh, there goes the music I came to love at Bethlehem." But I was wrong! The Search Committee at the church found another magnificent musician, Mrs. Arianne Abela, a PhD candidate in the Department of Music at the University of Michigan (U-M).

Abela has a desire to expose the congregation and the community (especially the youth) to great music and musicians. My first exposure to her accomplishing these goals was when she and the current organist, Gail Jennings, invited a couple of flute player-composers to give a concert at the church. Until that concert, I did not know that alto and bass flutes exist. The concert was

fantastic! It was so good, I had to dial my mother for her to hear it by telephone. My mother, who remembers very little these days, still remembers that flute concert.

My exposure to the great music emanating from this dynamic director of the Bethlehem Music Department continued in a concert featuring Audivi Vocem. They are an Ann Arbor-based group of a capella voices that are in such perfect pitch that even their dissonant chords are executed excellently!

Another inspiring concert was a recital of young students organized by their U-M organ instructor. The students ranged in age from seniors in high school to an eighth-grader. Each of them eloquently performed very complicated classical compositions on Bethlehem's pipe organ.

Going forward, not only is this music department presenting more outstanding music, but the free-will offerings from a series of 7:30 pm Sunday evening concerts titled "Bridges" will benefit various community organizations that actively provide needed services for people in the surrounding communities. The May 3 concert features the University Chorale of Western Michigan University and will benefit Alpha House. The final concert, on May 15, showcases Italian music performed by Andrew and Gail Jennings, and will benefit the Hope Clinic.

My friend Shawn Story used to say, "Don't just talk about it, BE about it!" These members of Bethlehem are not just playing church; according to Barb – also known as the parking lot German Pretzel Lady – "they *are* the church."

## International conference appeal

I'm going to explain in the following paragraphs the reasons why I'd like to go to Seattle, WA. First of all, it'd be a privilege to be part of the Groundcover News delegation at the 2015 International Network of Street Papers (INSP) conference. I just this year became a vendor, and as I said, it'd be a privilege to represent Groundcover and what I do for living now in a larger group of people at this event. I'm glad I would have the opportunity to be in this activity together with many other vendors.

Second and last, I really want to go to Seattle because I actually just moved from Washington state to Michigan last fall. I'm new in the area of Ann Arbor, and despite of how nice it is here, I miss

my people, my friends from Washington. I've lived in Minnesota, too, but I don't think I met as many people there as I did for the six years I lived in Seattle.

I hope I become one of the vendors who attend the conference and, if possible, show my friends what Groundcover is all about. I'm sure some of them will show an interest in knowing more about it and maybe follow up at the Groundcover website.

So, again, I appreciate the event and the fundraising to make it possible, and I hope I get elected to go.

**Sandra Sabatini, Vendor #233**

## Signs of the Times

by Elizabeth "Lit" Kurtz  
Groundcover Vendor #159

Groundcover customers may have been surprised to see signs next to vendors, bearing the Groundcover News logo. This has been a wonderful addition and has certainly piqued the curiosity of the public. When my sign was first revealed, a customer stopped his car to buy a paper. Since then, I have gotten wonderful comments and I agree that it proffers more visibility and legitimacy to the uninformed. These signs are adaptable to our situations and allow us to conceal all of our belongings for a neater appearance.

I made my own reveal by officially launching my own website solely dedicated to Groundcover sales. Regular readers may have noticed that each of us has a number which indicates the order in which we became vendors. My number is 159 and I have integrated it into my URL address: [http://gcv159lit](http://gcv159lit.weebly.com).

[weebly.com](http://weebly.com). With this website, I will be able to use social media to promote sales.

I am convinced that only by using 21<sup>st</sup> century technology will we combat and obliterate homelessness. It is unconscionable that homelessness has lasted thus far into this century, but with any luck this may be changing. My step into social media has been lauded by many and it is my hope that other vendors will follow suit. For now, you can find my link as well as my vendor profile on the Groundcover website, [www.groundcovernews.org](http://www.groundcovernews.org), in the Vendor Profiles section. I am sure that your favorite vendor will be there soon, too.

It is inevitable that with our new signs and a further step into social media last month, we all stand a better chance to work our way back into housing – as this publication was designed to help accomplish. These are encouraging signs of the times.

## Meals come to Milan-area seniors

by Claire Wagler  
U-M Student Contributor

Seniors in the Milan, Augusta, and York Townships can now sign up to have meals delivered to them, thanks to a partnership between the Office of Community and Economic Affairs and Milan Seniors for Healthy Living and Aid in Milan. There is a suggested donation of three dollars, but no one who is unable to pay will be denied meals. Because the senior population in Milan is increasing along with the senior population in all of Washtenaw County, need is increasing for services like home-delivered meals for seniors who cannot cook or buy food for themselves.

After a senior signs up for the Home Delivered Meals Program, a volunteer goes to their home to deliver meals and to check up on them whenever needed. A Congregate Meal Program is also available, wherein meals for seniors are

held in community buildings on three days every week. This both gives seniors needed meals and serves as an opportunity to meet other seniors in the area. The suggested donation for these group meals is also \$3.

To sign up for these programs, call Milan Seniors for Healthy Living at 734-508-6229. Registration for congregate meals is required at least two days in advance.

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## A walking account of historical Ann Arbor

by Julie Siegler, U-M Student Contributor  
& Robert Salo, Vendor #17

Robert Salo has a knack for Ann Arbor history. During his time selling papers in downtown Ann Arbor, he has taken advantage of the wealth of information available to the public. By reading the historical plaques and displays scattered thoughtfully throughout downtown, any passerby can learn a great deal about the development of Ann Arbor.

But unless you've been on Robert's personal tour, it may take a few hours to locate the many informational displays, and you would almost surely miss a few. Robert's candor and zeal give life to the history of the city we inhabit. For those of you that might not have the opportunity to take a tour with Robert yourself, I followed him and documented what he showed me.

We started our journey at the corner of William and South Main at the plaque describing the history of Ann Arbor's power and transportation. The history of power in Ann Arbor is intertwined with the Detroit Edison Company, whose home appliances showroom was across the street from this historical plaque from 1915-1983. Ann Arbor was fueled by oil, gas, and coal until electricity arrived in town in 1884. The Ann Arbor Van Depoele Light and Power Company's electrical power-generating plant, driven by coal-fired steam, lit 36 of the town's stores as well as many homes. Beginning in 1886, the Huron



Vendor and history buff Robert Salo shares with student Julie Siegler the plaque on W. Huron St. that tells the story of the name "Ann Arbor".

River's hydropower dams produced additional energy for the city.

In 1905, this lucrative opportunity caught the eye of the Detroit Edison Company, which began to buy the rights to water, land, mills and other small companies that had begun to take advantage of the Huron. This hydroelectric power began fueling Ann Arbor streetcars in 1912. As of 1890, these once coal-powered streetcars ran along Main Street and east on William towards the University of Michigan (U-M) campus, connecting U-M students to Ann Arbor's downtown area. Ann Arbor was one of the first cities in Michigan to abandon horses in favor of

this new technology.

Robert's favorite stop on our downtown tour was the historical installment dedicated to the story of the Ann sisters, after whom Ann Arbor was supposedly named in 1824. The plaque is green with oxidation and located on West Huron just west of Ashley, directly across the street from the Delonis Center. It reads: "This Tablet, erected by citizens of Ann Arbor, 1924, commemorates the founding of the city one hundred years ago. Near this spot stood a rustic Arbor covered with wild grapevines. Here Ann Allen and Ann Rumsey, the wives of John Allen and Elisha Walker Rumsey, met frequently for rest and

recreation. The Arbor was called – Ann's Arbor – and from it in honor of these pioneer women, the city received its name." Alternative names considered for the city included "Allensville" and "Annapolis."

There is dispute as to whether or not this story of Ann Arbor's naming is true. According to O.W. Stephenson's version of the city naming chronicled in *Ann Arbor: The First Hundred Years* (1927), John Allen approached Mrs. Ann Rumsey and said, "My! What a restful place you have here; what do you call it?" Mrs. Rumsey responded, "This is Ann's Arbor, don't you think that is a good name for the place?" However, Wystan Stevens' brochure entitled *The Naming of Ann Arbor* (1974) claims that Ann Rumsey and Ann Allen did not arrive to the city until May 25, three months after the deeds in Detroit record the naming of Ann Arbor, proving Stephenson's story false. Stevens cites the "first Ann Arbor historian," Mary Clark, who wrote in 1863 that the original "burr oak opening" of the village, resembling an arbor, was the inspiration for the city's name, not Ann Rumsey and Ann Allen.

It is important to consider the historical development of Ann Arbor not only to be more informed citizens, but also to be more conscious of our modern history and how we all contribute to its progress. Be sure to look out for more segments of Historical Ann Arbor in future issues of Groundcover News!

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## Living “Out Here”

by Elizabeth “Lit” Kurtz  
Groundcover Vendor #159

For some time, I’ve been telling folks that I lived “out here.” I presumed that everyone knew what I meant. But a friend of mine recently asked what I actually meant by the term. That was when I began pondering what this destination I refer to as “out here” really means, especially in relation to other places I’ve been.

It didn’t take much effort for me to remember my past. Our family roots are in Georgia, a place defined by peaches, pecans, Southern belles and Vidalia onions. My southern-born mother cooked collards, and though she forbade us to do so, ate them with her fingers in a glorious mash of cornbread and green liqueur. My growing up was defined by Michigan seasons: sledding, dandelions, mari-golds, and bushels of Baldwin and Golden Delicious apples.

Few words translate to describe my experiences now, at least in “First World” terms. *Homeless*: characterized by showerless days and many sleepless nights. It is a place where I struggle to feel pretty and often feel vulnerable.

*I am homeless now.*

*I construct each day anew*

*To build a new home.*

Perhaps I have always done that – and in some ways, we all do. That is, we use the tools – emotional, spiritual, and physical – to define and “construct” our space. The only difference is that now I am more cognizant of it, painfully aware that the carefully-chosen building blocks I choose today will directly affect my place in the world tomorrow. For the first time, I have to create my own space to help me maintain a sense of being. There are no indigenous plants in this place



Groundcover vendor and contributor Lit Kurtz sits in a place that frequently becomes a dormitory for those without housing.

and the traditions are those of immediate survival. These traditions are ones that, although shunned by the larger community, are vital for a meaningful subsistence.

Take, for instance, the long-held tradition of canning, which at one time for me meant partaking in a yearly practice of food preservation that had been passed down through generations of aproned mothers and grandmothers. It was an annual family (and sometimes community) activity of preparation for the winter months. The term “canning” now links me closer to my earliest ancestors of the early hunter-gatherer tribes who were not only unable to preserve food, but could merely hunt down enough for subsistence for a limited time. Canning in my new world bears no resemblance to its namesake. In this new world it means nothing less than collecting as many tossed-out beer cans and pop bottles as possible in a day so as to be able to stave off hunger. It is often a daylong task that people schedule for certain days during the week to get enough collected to eat, do laundry, or finance other tasks for a couple of days.

The contrast between First World and Third World America is remarkable, with the average First World individual having no appreciation for the time and effort needed to occupy this space and still maintain a sense of balance and propriety among First World inhabitants, with whom we invariably must interact.

So many things are predetermined in First World America and already defined. But out here, there is no

guarantee of plumbing, electricity, or furniture. Furniture is what I have sometimes missed the most. These are the “trappings” that informed my early life and transitioned me from childhood to adolescence, young adulthood – even menopause. Now in this abeyance, my spirit has often wandered in search of what I had before.

But while pondering, I had a gradual awareness that the seedlings I have planted here over many nights and days have grown to form a new kind of place. It’s a place where I’ve acquired patience, established new traditions, and found spots of respite in a world of unpredictability and confusion. “Out here” has become a *place* – though lacking physical boundaries, it has many other characteristics that make it separate from any I have ever had or expect to have again. It is a place where I have formed lasting bonds, gone through unexpected and unpredictable challenges, yet woken up to face another day with gratitude. Though out here is definitely a place where I never want to return, it is still one that has gifted me the ability to discern which things are important in life and which are merely fanciful or transient. Out here has given me wonderful memories that I will carry with me long after I have found my way back to the world where I once lived.

**The earth laughs in flowers.**  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson



**Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed!**

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	5		6		9		2	
	9		3		4		1	
4				5				6
7		9				3		4
2		3				6		7
8				9				2
	4		7		2		6	
	2		8		6		3	

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

## Cryptoquote:

GNZJ GZ RHZ JE XEJPZH RCXZ  
BE UNRJPZ R LTBFRTBJ, GZ  
RHZ UNRXXZJPZK BE UNRJPZ  
EFHLZXQZL.

– QTIBEH Z. MHRJIX

Clue: I = L

## Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover News is a nonprofit organization and newspaper vendors are considered contracted self-employers, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following list is our Vendor Code of Conduct, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

*All vendors must agree to the following code of conduct:*

- Groundcover News will be distributed for a voluntary donation of \$1, or the face value of the paper. I agree not to ask for more than face value or solicit donations by any other means.
- I will only sell current issues of Groundcover News.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover News Staff and will not sell

to or buy papers from other Groundcover News vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.

- I agree to treat all customers, staff and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover News under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover News but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover News and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover News.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.

If you see any Groundcover News vendors not abiding by the code of conduct, please report the activity to:  
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### ACROSS

- Any of six Popes
- Georgia city
- Concave polygon
- European city
- \_\_\_\_\_ with *Judy*, 1948 movie
- Ms. Horne
- Equivocator
- An America
- Means of departure
- Beef
- Actress Dolenz
- Be situated
- Toyota model
- Actress Lombard
- Color
- Redolence
- Lunar feature
- Blunder
- Equivalent
- Pacific archipelago
- Relieve
- Actor Jake
- Compensation
- Asian civet
- Scram
- Type of insurance
- Michelangelo work
- Big \_\_\_\_\_
- Mauna \_\_\_\_\_
- Chicken
- Burden
- Italian clothing brand
- Ever and \_\_\_\_\_
- One of the Jackson 5
- Major artery
- Turkish currency
- Articulates
- "\_\_\_\_\_ Lucy"
- Eighteenth century philosopher

### DOWN

- Survey
- Owl genus
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bator, Mongolia
- Aristocrat
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jackson, Harlem Globetrotter
- Clay brick
- Rhode Island river
- \_\_\_\_\_ Graham, NFL quarterback

### World cuisine

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51				52	53	54	55				56	57	58	59
60			61		62						63			
64					65						66			
67					68						69			

- Soft drink brand
- Lupus (abbr.)
- Bread
- Cartoon
- Fraction
- Pot for cooking
- Vinyl audio discs (abbr.)
- Greek islands, collectively
- Spanish house
- \_\_\_\_\_ League
- Fruit
- Egg dish
- Distance
- Impulse
- Sulu, for example
- Complain
- Bones
- Perceive

- \_\_\_\_\_ -edged sword
- Suzuki model
- Prattle
- Triangles
- Land parcels
- Michigan city
- Moisten food
- Jazz's home
- Tool for splitting wood
- Actor Jamie
- Four balls
- Dolphin genus
- Verdandi, for one
- Small insect
- Distress signal

Puzzle by Jeff Richmond



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8:30 am and 10:00 am  
Sunday school at 10:15 am  
Fellowship Hour follows each service

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- May 9 (Saturday) Bethlehem Bell Fundraising event, 6 pm**  
Heidelberg Restaurant, Ann Arbor.  
Featuring the Wannabes, Gail Jennings, and the Bethlehem String Quartet. (\$5 cover at door.)
- May 3 (Sunday) Bethlehem Bridges Concert, 7:30 pm, sanctuary**  
University Chorale of Western Michigan Univ.
- May 15 (Friday) Bethlehem Bridges Concert, 7:30 pm, sanctuary**  
Gail & Andrew Jennings, Italian Music
- May 16 (Saturday) German Pretzel Sales, 10:30 am-12 noon**  
\$1 each or \$10 dozen
- May 29 (Friday) German Pretzel Sales, 11 am-2 pm**  
\$1 each or \$10 dozen

[www.bethlehem-ucc.org](http://www.bethlehem-ucc.org)  
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[www.pinterest.com/bethlehemucca2](https://www.pinterest.com/bethlehemucca2)





# Coming out from covert identities – telling a secret or revealing vulnerability

by **Melissa Golden**  
U-M Student Contributor

*Editor's Note: This is the final segment of an article written by a U-M student who has now graduated. The names used in this article were changed but the stories are real. The earlier segment ran in the April issue of Groundcover.*

Those on the LGBT spectrum who also have a mental health disorder live with two not so obvious identities, making their coming out process twofold. Whether these identities are well-received or met with a negative backlash, coming out can make a huge impact on an individual's life – it certainly did for Jacob Costa and Zoe Fischer, two University of Michigan students who identify as LGBT and have also struggled with a mental health disorder.

The first step in the coming out process for anyone with a hidden identity is, usually, coming out to him or herself. Fischer first remembers actively thinking about her own sexuality in middle school. “[Accepting I was queer] was never really something I struggled with,” she said. “There was never really a period of denial or being upset about it.”

Costa, on the other hand, experienced denial regarding his sexuality throughout many of his younger years. He first realized he was gay in middle school, but did not come out until he went to college. “I think I was scared because of the way the media portrays [being gay], and because I didn't think my parents would be very accepting of it,” Costa cites as reasons for not wanting to come out.

“[Being gay] also just made me feel like an outcast, especially in high school, where people are so judgmental. In addition to all that, I remember in high school there were only ever maybe a handful of gay kids – if even – that people knew about, and there were never really positive things that were said about them, so I didn't want to be identified with that target community,” Costa continued. “So I think I just pushed it to the side and just was like, ‘Well, maybe at worst, I'm bi, and maybe, hopefully, I can just repress it.’”

When Costa left that high school environment, his mind changed. “By the time I started college, I kind of started realizing, ‘No, this isn't me being bisexual, I'm definitely gay, and if I don't start coming out now, then I'm never going to move on with my life and be happy,’” he said. “I figured that [coming out] was going to be really hard, but that it was something that I had to start

doing at some point.”

Costa started by telling just one friend at college, and since it went well, he told more people. “It was scary,” he said, “but at the same time it's definitely a good feeling to come out and have someone accept you.”

Like Costa, Fischer also came out to her friends first. She recalls first discussing her sexuality with her friends when she was in middle school at a friend's sleepover birthday party. “[My sexuality] was fairly easy to tell friends about – I don't actually remember many specifics about coming out to people except for with my family.”

Fischer came out to her mom during her senior year of high school, and to her brother during her freshman year of college. She held back on telling her dad because she wasn't sure he would believe her. “It wasn't that I was actively hiding anything,” Fischer said, “but I didn't like that this was a part of me that [my dad] didn't know about.” So one day, while in the car with her father, Fischer bit back her nerves, and told him. “He said, ‘I will love you no matter what,’ which is the ideal response,” Fischer said.

Costa expressed more difficulty coming out as LGBT to family. He first told his sister, and then his mom, who both responded positively, but the rest of his family found out because his boyfriend at the time posted a picture on Facebook of them together against Costa's wishes.

In response to the picture, Costa received a message from one of his elder brothers saying, “I saw these pictures of you and I can't believe you would do this. You know dad's not going to accept this, and he's probably going to want to kill himself now – he's not going to be able to live with this. Our younger brothers are going to see this, and what are they going to think? You're giving them the wrong impression.”

Despite his brother's claim, Costa's father, similar to Fischer's, told him, “It's not what I would have wished for you because I know it's not going to be easy, but I accept you and I'm always going to love you.” As for his other older brother, Costa said, “He didn't even address it – it was more like he just chose to not have any connection with me anymore.”

“It was hurtful to hear that from [my brothers], and it was frustrating to see how ignorant they were, but at the same time, to me it was honestly like I didn't really lose anything,” said Costa, who had never had a strong connection

with his two elder brothers. “To me, the most important people are my mom, my dad, and my sister, and all of them are cool with it,” he said, and because of that he is pretty happy with his family situation, despite having no connection with his two elder brothers since they found out he was gay.

“Mental health has sort-of overshadowed being queer for me,” Fischer admitted. “I wouldn't say [being queer] is a small part of who I am, but that it's on equal levels with other things that I do and how I identify, whereas depression and anxiety are a much larger part.”

Fischer's depression and anxiety played a major role in her life starting at a young age. “The first time I remember being suicidal was when I was 7,” Fischer said, “so it's just been around for a long time – and I was self-injuring as a little kid before I knew what cutting was or anything, which I started when I was 13.” Despite these thoughts starting so young, it wasn't until eighth or ninth grade that Fischer told some friends that she had been self-injuring and had an eating disorder.

“It was a lot harder to tell people about it back then,” Fischer said, “especially because, even though I'm not secretive about mental health, I still, even with myself, go back and forth sometimes [about what to think] – and I know it's a real thing. I know that depression is a real thing because I have it, and I deal with it, and I take medication, and I know what it's like when I don't, or when I take different meds. But there are still times when I feel like, ‘Well, that's just you, and you just can't deal with things.’” Fischer continued, “That's the one thing that makes it hard to tell some people – because there are some people who don't acknowledge it as a real thing.”

Fischer has also struggled with family members understanding her mental health disorder. Her dad was anti-psychiatry for a while, didn't believe that her mental health disorders were real, and would often ask her when she was going to stop her medication.

“My brother also just wouldn't get that it was a real thing,” Fischer said. “When I would say things to my brother about how I just couldn't get out of bed and make myself go to class, he would be like, ‘What do you mean? You just take the covers off and you go.’ It was something that he really wouldn't understand – that this isn't because I'm lazy, it isn't because I don't want to – I just can't make myself.”

Fischer continued, “[When I was in the

hospital during my sophomore year of college] was when there was the most strain on [my brother's and my] relationship. He continued saying things like that, and I told him, ‘I've been hospitalized four times, I've overdosed before and been an hour away from dying. What is it going to take for you to understand that if this were something that I could just snap out of, I would have done it already?’”

Luckily, Fischer's relationship with her brother has improved since she was last in the hospital. She says he has become more open to accepting her mental health disorder, though she still doesn't think he grasps it very well. Additionally, her father has made a lot of progress in understanding, and now isn't adamantly anti-psychiatry.

Costa's story went a little differently – his mom was actually the first person he went to when his depression grew to be too unbearable during his sophomore year of college. He first experienced depression in high school, but did not really think of it as a mental health disorder at the time.

Costa's depression worsened during his sophomore year of college. “Things eventually spiraled to the point where I was kind-of like a zombie,” Costa said. “I didn't really feel anything, I wasn't motivated. And then it got to the point where I'd have suicidal thoughts. Sometimes I'd be crossing the street and I would be like, ‘Well, I just don't want to walk anymore. I just want to wait here for a car to hit me.’ And I would get these impulses to jump from trees or jump from the roof of my dorm.”

Costa continued, “I got to the point where I was like, ‘If I don't tell someone about this or just face the facts, I probably will end up doing something to myself. I called my mom and broke down crying, and I was like ‘I need help. I can't handle this anymore.’”

Costa's mom told his sister about the conversation, and both of them called the university asking what could be done to help him. “They were very supportive,” Costa said.

“I could probably count on one hand the number of people I've told,” Costa admitted. “I just feel like it's something really personal and I don't really see how telling someone would help me.” He continued, “And I guess part of me doesn't want them to see me as, ‘Oh, he's that crazy guy.’ I guess I just don't want to be treated differently.”

see **COMING OUT**, page 10



## Coming out from covert identities

continued from page 9

Costa explained further, "Even now, it's something I keep even more hidden than my being gay, and it's because there's such an awful stigma about people with mental health disorders. And on top of that, I feel like a lot of people just don't understand, just because of the language that people use." Costa cited examples of when people throw around mental health disorders colloquially, such as saying, "This sucks so much I want to kill myself," or "I'm so depressed that I have to study for a test tomorrow."

"I feel like [the language people use] trivializes what people with actual depression and stuff like that go through," Costa explained, "so I feel like if I told people I have depression, people would just be like, 'Oh, no, we all have depression in college – it's something we all go through.' It's definitely something I only tell people in very particular circumstances."

Fischer talked about how her mental health disorder has disrupted her employment. "[A mental health disorder is] something that's a little scarier or harder to tell an employer," Fischer admitted. "With depression and anxiety, I've thought a lot more about how it's going to affect my future and career [more than being queer]. I've had problems just at normal jobs in being so stressed either at work or just having such a horrible day or time in general that I can't work. I've had times where I've had to go and step out because I couldn't stop crying."

She continued, "That's definitely something that I've worried about before and thought, 'Am I going to ever be able to just handle a job, or is this always going to be getting in the way for me?'" Unfortunately, Fischer's fears once became a reality for her. "I was actually let go from somewhere because I was just not in a place where I could keep myself stable enough, so I couldn't handle working in that environment," she said.

Costa has never told an employer about his depression, and doesn't plan to in the future. "I think it's something very

personal, and I don't like to get personal in work situations," Costa said. "I don't think it's ever affected work directly in terms of like me being fired or anything like that, but it definitely has affected how I interact with people at work."

Despite many of the differences in her experiences coming out as LGBT and coming out with a mental health disorder, Fischer noticed a relationship between her LGBT identity and her mental health disorder in her communication and ability to come out to others.

"I think that because I've dealt with mental health stuff actively longer than I've thought about any sort of queer identity, I've gotten used to being able to tell people things that are a little bit difficult to tell," she said. "So I would probably say that having mental [health] issues and having to come out with that so many times has made it less intimidating to come out as queer."

Costa also expressed a clear intersection between the two identities. "From my personal experience meeting other people who are LGBT, I think that in most cases – and maybe they won't admit this to other people, but in the majority of cases – there's a relationship between [being LGBT and having a mental health disorder]," Costa said.

He continued, "And I think that's because LGBT people are so marginalized, especially at our age, like through middle school and high school, just because of the media, the way people treat us, and things that are being said. I think that it almost always leads to some sort of anxiety, depression, image issues, and a whole range of things."

"Unfortunately," Costa said, "sometimes I feel like if I was straight and had depression it would be easier because I wouldn't have all of these additional thoughts bringing me down." He elaborated, "I feel like when you are part of the LGBT community, you have additional micro-aggressions and just things you have to think about and deal with that people who are not LGBT don't have to."



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Keeping families healthy: policy intersection of health care and immigration

by Montana Nash, Julia Porth, Alana Lebrón and William Lopez  
U-M Groundcover Contributors

Like many mothers, Mariana goes to bed each night and wakes up each morning concerned about how to keep her family healthy. Mariana is a 26-year-old Mexican mother of five with one more on the way who has lived in the United States for 15 years. With some children born in the United States and others born in Mexico, getting and keeping health insurance for her young family is a continual challenge and major source of stress for Mariana. She knows that she cannot pay out-of-pocket for her family's needs, and thus she must find health care coverage that will allow her to provide them with the resources they need.

Mariana is particularly concerned about her youngest son. "He needs his six-month check-up, especially with being premature, you know? They had him going every week for the first two months for a weight check just to make sure... but now I can't take him," she said.

Mariana and her family live their daily lives at the complex intersection of health care policy and immigration policy. She, her husband and her children form a "mixed status" family, or a family with some combination of undocumented immigrants, permanent residents and U.S. citizens living together under the same roof. Unfortunately, this means that some members of the family may have access to health care coverage while others do not, creating different life trajectories and requiring different criteria for individuals within the same family. This disparity exists even after the implementation



Drawing by Lalita Ramirez-Lopez

of the Affordable Care Act, as undocumented immigrants are not permitted to purchase private insurance in state insurance exchanges and are exempted from the individual mandate. The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP – known as MICHild in our state) also excludes undocumented children.

The health care and immigration systems and the policies that extend from them unduly complicate the maintenance of health and well-being for immigrant families. Not only must Mariana and parents like her navigate these immense and convoluted systems; they must do so amid experiences of interpersonal and systemic discrimination and marginalization. For Mariana and other Latino immigrants and their

children, officials often read the color of their skin as a sign of undocumented status, even if they were born here. Mariana knows this homogenization all-too-well. "My baby doesn't have insurance, either. They cut it out, saying that [the baby] didn't have a social security card... that they needed some more documentation. But, he has a social security card, he was born here," she said.

Mariana is one of nearly half-a-million

Latinos in Michigan, and a member of one of many mixed-status families nationwide. Like so many others, she struggles for the access to health care and fair treatment that so many take for granted. For the voting citizens among us, it is imperative that we vote wisely and empathetically, thinking beyond entrenched government systems to consider how these systems intersect and shape the lives of families like Mariana's every day.



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## Cheese and Spinach Strata



by **Liz Bauman**  
Groundcover Contributor

A perfect way to use this spring vegetable. So easy – simply assemble the night before. Preparation time: 30 minutes. Serves 8-10.

### Ingredients:

2 tablespoons butter

1 ¼ cups onion, finely chopped

1 ½ pounds fresh spinach (chopped, with stems removed)

1 teaspoon salt, divided

½ teaspoon pepper, divided

8 cups day-old French or Italian bread (cut into 1-inch cubes)

2 cups coarsely grated Gruyere or Swiss cheese

2/3 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

9 large eggs

2 ¾ cups milk

### Directions:

1. Melt the butter in a skillet over medium heat. Add onions and sauté until soft. Add ½ teaspoon salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Cook for 1 minute more. Stir in the spinach and then remove from the heat. Set aside to cool.
2. Butter the inside of a 3-quart baking dish. Layer with 1/3 of the bread cubes. Top with 1/3 of the spinach mixture and 1/3 of each of the cheeses. Repeat layers with remaining bread, spinach mixture and cheese.
3. In a medium bowl, combine the eggs, milk and the remaining salt and pepper. Whisk together until blended. Pour the mixture evenly over the ingredients in the baking dish. Cover and chill in refrigerator for at least 8 hours.
4. Remove from refrigerator 30 minutes before baking. Bake uncovered in a preheated oven at 350 degrees for 45-55 minutes. It should be puffed and golden brown. Allow the strata to stand for 5 minutes before serving.

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## Strange (but Mostly True) Stories About a Mother and her Daughter • Cy Klone © 2015

I can't believe this weather.

What's the big deal?

I don't appreciate shedding my winter coat only to find it freezing when I go out on the balcony.

Really, mom? You're so old you can't handle a little cold air? I just spent an entire night out there!

It's more about how it affects my entire outdoor experience.

Didn't bother me. Maybe sensitive cats like you need to wait a day or so for the weather to warm up.

Well right now I find it hard to enjoy basking in the sun with freezing breezes ruffling my now less-than-full coat.

Old cat complains about weather! News at 11 .....Hey, look over there - is that a May flower?